

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

On page 1, after the title of the application, please insert the following section:

This application is a §371 national phase filing of PCT/NL2004/000046 filed January 20, 2004; and claims priority to a Dutch application NL 1022443 filed January 20, 2003.

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

1. (ORIGINAL) A method for improving the composition of the intestinal flora of a bird or a mammal, comprising administering, to said bird or said mammal, a food in which one or more sphingolipids chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or a precursor, a derivative, or suitable salt thereof are overabundant.

2. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 1, wherein said one or more sphingolipids are present in said food in an amount of 0.05 to 50 wt.%.

3. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 1, wherein said sphingolipid is present in said food in an amount of 1 to 10 wt.%.

4. (ORIGINAL) A method for improving the composition of the intestinal flora of a bird or a mammal, comprising administering, to said bird or said mammal, of a pharmaceutical preparation comprising a sphingolipid chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or a precursor, a derivative, or suitable salt thereof, and one or more excipients.

5. (ORIGINAL) A method according to any one of claims 1-4, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.

6. (ORIGINAL) A food in which one or more sphingolipids chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or a precursor, a derivative, or suitable salt thereof are overabundant.

7. (ORIGINAL) A food according to claim 6, in which said one or more sphingolipids are present in an amount from 0.05 to 50 wt.%.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A food according to claim 6 ~~or 7~~, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An animal feed comprising a food according to any one of claims 6-8 or 13.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) Use of a sphingolipid chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin, and sphinganine for the preparation of a medicine for the improvement of the composition of the intestinal flora.

11. (ORIGINAL) Use according to claim 10, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for the preparation of a food according to any one of claims 6-8 or 13, comprising incorporating said sphingolipid, or a derivative, or suitable salt thereof in a food in a content of 0.05 to 50 wt.%.

Attorney Docket No. VER-194XX

Filed: Herewith

TC Art Unit:

Confirmation No.:

13. (NEW) A food according to claim 7, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.